

February 9, 2016

To: Chairman Hawkins and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee
From: Marcie Kelly, Wichita resident and melanoma survivor

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2369

I'd like to share my experiences as a wife, mother and Kansan in hope of helping you and others understand how dangerous indoor tanning can be, and how important it is to prevent other families from enduring what mine has.

I am that girl that would do whatever my friends were doing as long as it wasn't breaking the law or disappointing my parents. So when it came time to get ready for our formal dances in high school, we all went tanning quite a bit – it seemed like an important part of the routine, like finding the perfect dress, shoes, or hair style. I have such wonderful happy memories of my high school years with my friends. We had three formal dances a year for four years and we all did the same thing every time. *I didn't realize at the time that this pre-dance routine would cause so much pain and misery for my family.* Now, 15 years later, I realize that what I did back then has hurt my family now, and I wish there had been a law to protect me from doing something so dangerous.

Two years ago, I noticed that a mole on my back had changed, so I went to my dermatologist and she removed it. Unfortunately biopsies showed that it was melanoma and it was metastatic. I had to go through major surgery, including a wide excision from my back and removal of lymph nodes under the arm pit to make sure the cancer hadn't spread. I will never forget that phone call from my doctor telling me that he had some good news and some bad news: good news was he got all the cancer removed from my back (after surgery the side of body looks like I was bitten by a shark). Bad news was the cancer had spread to lymph nodes, which put me at a stage 3. So I had another surgery to remove more lymph nodes and then went off to the Cancer Center for more treatment.

I had never been so scared in my life...especially when the oncologist told my husband and I that there wasn't a cure for melanoma but that he would do everything he could to help me and my family. I started a month of every day chemo infusions - this drug makes you feel like you have the flu all day every day. I was monitored daily because of my white blood count always dropping below normal. After a month of infusions, I was on to injecting myself every-other day for 11 months. This treatment made it so hard for me to function every day – as a mom, wife, employee or friend.

Today, I am 2 years from diagnosis and one year from being off of treatment, so where does that leave me? I have been getting full body CT scans every three months since day one. With each scan, I am exposed to radiation and it drives my anxiety. Most upsetting is that, after each scan, I have to wait for a week before I know if I am ok for another three months. During the week of waiting, I live in dark place that over takes my bubbly personality.

Melanoma has robbed me of who I was....I will always remember three months from being off of treatment I was scheduled for another CT scan and I cried in fear to my husband and he asked me would all this end and get back to normal? **I realized then that I would never be "normal" again and I was going to do all I could to prevent this from happening to other girls.**

I love being a mom and wife, my boys are what I wake up and live for....to think we hold our breath every 3 months....to live scan to scan...was all because I wanted to look great with my friends at some formal event 15 years ago. I wish someone had told me what it was going to do me and my family...I wouldn't have done it. *I am here now to protect my children, and my grandchildren and my kids' grandchildren.* **Let's stop underage tanning – kids don't know better, so it's up to you as lawmakers to protect them from devices that clearly cause cancer.**